

CLAIMS

1. A workflow management method for processing a drug prescription in a pharmacy comprising:
 - 5 receiving a drug prescription;
estimating a date and a time by which the drug prescription will be fulfilled and available to a customer;
initiating a prescription transaction by retrieving data from the drug prescription;
checking the pharmacy inventory;
 - 10 obtaining an insurance adjudication review; and
predicting a prescription pick up time, the predicted prescription pick up time being determined by one of confirming the estimated date and time and resetting the estimated date and time by which the drug prescription will be fulfilled and available to the customer.
- 15 2. The workflow management method of claim 1 further comprising relaying the predicted prescription pick up time to the customer.
3. The workflow management method of claim 1 wherein initiating a prescription transaction includes initiating the prescription transaction while in communication with the
20 customer and reporting an outcome of initiating the prescription transaction to the customer.

4. The workflow management method of claim 1 wherein checking the pharmacy inventory includes checking the pharmacy inventory while in communication with the customer and reporting an outcome of checking the pharmacy inventory to the customer.

5 5. The workflow management method of claim 1 wherein obtaining the insurance adjudication review includes obtaining the insurance adjudication review while in communication with the customer and reporting an outcome of obtaining the insurance adjudication review to the customer.

10 6. The workflow management method of claim 1 wherein confirming the estimated date and time by which the drug prescription will be fulfilled and available to the customer includes confirming the estimated date and time based on an outcome of one or more of retrieving data from the drug prescription, checking the pharmacy inventory and obtaining insurance adjudication review.

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7. The workflow management method of claim 6 wherein the outcome includes an outcome without one or more problems associated with one or more of retrieving data from the drug prescription, checking the pharmacy inventory and obtaining insurance adjudication review.

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8. The workflow management method of claim 1 wherein resetting the estimated date and time by which the drug prescription will be fulfilled and available to the customer includes resetting the estimated date and time based on an outcome of one or more of

retrieving data from the drug prescription, checking the pharmacy inventory and obtaining insurance adjudication review.

9. The workflow management method of claim 8 wherein the outcome includes an

5 outcome having one or more problems associated with one or more of retrieving data from the drug prescription, checking the pharmacy inventory and obtaining insurance adjudication review.

10. The workflow management method of claim 9 wherein resetting the estimated date

10 and time by which the drug prescription will be fulfilled and available to the customer further includes resetting the estimated date and time based on an estimated time to resolve the one or more problems associated with one or more of retrieving data from the drug prescription, checking the pharmacy inventory and obtaining insurance adjudication review.

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11. The workflow management method of claim 1 further comprising identifying one or more problems associated with one or more of retrieving data from the drug prescription, checking the pharmacy inventory and obtaining insurance adjudication review.

20 12. The workflow management method of claim 11 further comprising relaying the predicted prescription pick-up time to the customer.

13. The workflow management method of claim 12 further comprising informing the customer of the one or more problems.

14. The workflow management method of claim 13 further comprising informing the customer of an estimated time to resolve the one or more problems.

15. The workflow management method of claim 10 further comprising initiating resolution of the one or more problems by entering data identifying the one or more problems into an action note.

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16. The workflow management method of claim 15 wherein the action note is further completed to include a history of the resolution of the one or more problems.

17. The workflow management method of claim 16 wherein the history of the resolution of the one or more problems includes one or more of a description of the one or more problems, one or more steps taken toward the resolution of the one or more problems, an outcome of one or more steps taken toward the resolution of the one or more problems, a record of one or more efforts to contact the customer regarding the one or more problems and the predicted prescription pick up time.

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18. The workflow management method of claim 1 further comprising prioritizing fulfillment of the drug prescription based on the predicted prescription pick up time.

19. The workflow management method of claim 18 wherein prioritizing fulfillment of the drug prescription includes entering and ordering the drug prescription relative to other drug prescriptions in one or more work queues based on the predicted prescription pick up time.
- 5 20. The workflow management method of claim 18 further comprising fulfilling the drug prescription and providing availability to the fulfilled drug prescription before the predicted prescription pick up time.
21. The workflow management method of claim 18 further comprising prioritizing
10 fulfillment of the drug prescription based on whether the customer will wait for the drug prescription to be filled.
22. The workflow management method of claim 21 further comprising fulfilling the drug prescription with priority before fulfilling one or more other drug prescriptions.
- 15 23. The workflow management method of claim 22 wherein the one or more other drug prescriptions includes one or more drug prescriptions for which a customer is not waiting for fulfillment.
- 20 24. The workflow management method of claim 1 further comprising fulfilling the drug prescription and conducting a drug utilization review before the predicted prescription pick up time.

25. The workflow management method of claim 1 wherein the drug prescription includes a refill drug prescription, and further comprising checking refill authorization.

26. A computer readable memory having a computer program for controlling workflow

5 for processing a drug prescription in a pharmacy comprising:

recording an estimated date and a time by which the drug prescription will be fulfilled and available to a customer after receipt of a drug prescription;

initiating a prescription transaction by retrieving data from the drug prescription;

checking the pharmacy inventory;

10 obtaining an insurance adjudication review;

predicting a prescription pick up time, the predicted prescription pick up time being determined by one of confirming the estimated date and time and resetting the estimated date and time by which the drug prescription will be fulfilled and available to the customer; and recording the predicted prescription pick up time.

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27. The computer readable memory of claim 26 further comprising relaying the predicted prescription pick up time to the customer.

28. The computer readable memory of claim 26 wherein initiating a prescription

20 transaction includes initiating the prescription transaction while in communication with the customer and reporting an outcome of initiating the prescription transaction to the customer.

29. The computer readable memory of claim 26 wherein checking the pharmacy inventory includes checking the pharmacy invention while in communication with the customer and reporting an outcome of checking the pharmacy inventory to the customer.

5 30. The computer readable memory of claim 26 wherein obtaining the insurance adjudication review includes obtaining the insurance adjudication review while in communication with the customer and reporting an outcome of obtaining the insurance adjudication review to the customer.

10 31. The computer readable memory of claim 26 wherein confirming the estimated date and time by which the drug prescription will be fulfilled and available to the customer includes confirming the estimated date and time based on an outcome of one or more of retrieving data from the drug prescription, checking the pharmacy inventory and obtaining insurance adjudication review.

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32. The workflow management method of claim 31 wherein the outcome includes an outcome without one or more problems associated with one or more of retrieving data from the drug prescription, checking the pharmacy inventory and obtaining insurance adjudication review.

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33. The computer readable memory of claim 26 wherein resetting the estimated date and time by which the drug prescription will be fulfilled and available to the customer includes resetting the estimated date and time based on an outcome of one or more of retrieving data

from the drug prescription, checking the pharmacy inventory and obtaining insurance adjudication review.

34. The computer readable memory of claim 33 wherein the outcome includes an outcome
5 having one or more problems associated with one or more of retrieving data from the drug prescription, checking the pharmacy inventory and obtaining insurance adjudication review.

35. The computer readable memory of claim 34 wherein resetting the estimated date and time by which the drug prescription will be fulfilled and available to the customer further
10 includes resetting the estimated date and time based on an estimated time to resolve the one or more problems associated with one or more of retrieving data from the drug prescription, checking the pharmacy inventory and obtaining insurance adjudication review.

36. The computer readable memory of claim 26 further comprising identifying one or
15 more problems associated with one or more of retrieving data from the drug prescription, checking the pharmacy inventory and obtaining insurance adjudication review.

37. The computer readable memory of claim 36 further comprising relaying the predicted prescription pick-up time to the customer.

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38. The computer readable memory of claim 37 further comprising informing the customer of the one or more problems.

39. The computer readable memory of claim 38 further comprising informing the customer of an estimated time to resolve the one or more problems.

40. The computer readable memory of claim 35 further comprising initiating resolution of the one or more problems by entering data identifying the one or more problems into an action note.

41. The computer readable memory of claim 40 wherein the action note is further completed to include a history of the resolution of the one or more problems.

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42. The computer readable memory of claim 41 wherein the history of the resolution of the one or more problems includes one or more of a description of the one or more problems, one or more steps taken toward the resolution of the one or more problems, an outcome of one or more steps taken toward the resolution of the one or more problems, a record of one or more efforts to contact the customer regarding the one or more problems and the predicted prescription pick up time.

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43. The computer readable memory of claim 26 further comprising prioritizing fulfillment of the drug prescription based on the predicted prescription pick up time.

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44. The computer readable memory of claim 43 wherein prioritizing fulfillment of the drug prescription includes entering and ordering the drug prescription relative to other drug prescriptions in one or more work queues based on the predicted prescription pick up time.

45. The computer readable memory of claim 43 further comprising fulfilling the drug prescription and providing availability to the fulfilled drug prescription before the predicted prescription pick up time.

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46. The computer readable memory of claim 43 further comprising prioritizing fulfillment of the drug prescription based on whether the customer will wait for the drug prescription to be filled.

10 47. The computer readable memory of claim 46 further comprising fulfilling the drug prescription with priority before fulfilling one or more other drug prescriptions.

48. The computer readable memory of claim 47 wherein the one or more other drug prescriptions includes one or more drug prescriptions for which a customer is not waiting for
15 fulfillment.

49. The computer readable memory of claim 26 further comprising fulfilling the drug prescription and conducting a drug utilization review before the predicted prescription pick up time.

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50. The computer readable memory of claim 26 wherein the drug prescription includes a refill drug prescription, and further comprising obtaining refill authorization.

51. A workflow management system for controlling the fulfillment of a drug prescription comprising:

one or more workflow stations established to complete a series of pharmacy activities to fulfill the drug prescription, each workflow station handling one or more specific tasks;

5 each workflow station being defined in terms of one or more responsibilities of one or more persons staffing the workflow station;

each workflow station being further defined in terms of one or more skill levels required to handle the specific tasks of each workflow station; and

each workflow station being assigned a minimum number of persons required at each
10 skill level, the minimum number of persons required at each skill level being a number predicted from data related to volume and timing of one or more of the pharmacy activities.

52. The workflow management system of claim 51 wherein at least one workflow station includes a data entry station for retrieving prescription data and initiating a prescription
15 transaction.

53. The workflow management system of claim 52 wherein initiating the prescription transaction includes conducting a pharmacy inventory check while in communication with a customer for which the prescription transaction is initiated.

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54. The workflow management system of claim 52 wherein initiating the prescription transaction includes performing an insurance review to confirm insurance while in communication with a customer for which the prescription transaction is initiated.

55. A method for determining a staffing schedule for assigning persons to a transaction workflow comprising:

generating a predicted volume of transactions for a period of time to be scheduled;

5 generating a predicted timing of the predicted volume of transactions for the period of time;

expressing the predicted timing as a predicted volume of transactions for each of specific increments of time within the period of time to be scheduled;

10 converting the predicted volume of transactions for each of the specific increments of time into a recommended minimum number of persons required at one or more skill levels; and

producing a recommended staffing schedule for the period of time that represents the recommended minimum number of persons required at each skill level for each of the specific increments of time.

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56. The method of claim 55 wherein generating the predicted volume and the predicted timing of transactions for the period of time to be scheduled includes recording and storing transaction data for a workflow site and averaging the stored transaction data over a given time.

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57. The method of claim 56 wherein the recommended staffing schedule further includes a budgeted number of hours to be allocated for each skill level for the period of time and a requested number of hours to be allocated for each skill level for the period of time.

58. The method of claim 57 wherein the requested number of hours to be allocated for each skill level includes a number of hours based on the average stored transaction data.

5 59. The method of claim 58 wherein the recommended staffing schedule includes a discretionary number of hours expressed as a difference between the budgeted and the requested numbers of hours to be allocated to a skill level.

60. The method of claim 59 wherein one or more discretionary hours allocated to a first
10 skill level can be allocated to a second skill level to reduce a negative difference between the budgeted and the requested numbers of hours to be allocated to the second skill level.

61. The method of claim 58 further comprising comparing the recommended staffing
schedule for the period of time to an actual staffing schedule for a prior similar period of time
15 and producing from the comparison a gap/surplus staffing schedule that identifies surpluses and deficiencies of a number of persons for each skill level for each of the specific increments of time.

62. The method of claim 61 wherein the surpluses and deficiencies of the number of
20 persons for each skill level are expressed in terms of a difference between the recommended minimum number and the requested number of persons for each skill level.

63. The method of claim 61 further comprising adjusting the gap/surplus staffing schedule to eliminate the surpluses and deficiencies of persons for each skill level in view of the budgeted number of hours to be allocated for the skill level.

5 64. The method of claim 63 wherein adjusting the gap/surplus staffing schedule includes adjusting one of a start time of one or more persons for a skill level and an end time of one or more persons for the skill level.

65. The method of claim 64 further comprising producing the staffing schedule for
10 assigning persons to the transaction workflow from the adjusted gap/surplus staffing schedule.

66. The method of claim 55 wherein the period of time includes one of a day, a week and a month.

15 67. The method of claim 66 wherein each of the specific increments of time includes an hour.

68. A computer readable memory having a computer program for determining a staffing schedule for assigning persons to a transaction workflow comprising:

generating a predicted volume of transactions for a period of time to be scheduled;

generating a predicted timing of the predicted volume of transactions for the period of

5 time;

expressing the predicted timing as a predicted volume of transactions for each of specific increments of time within the period of time to be scheduled;

converting the predicted volume of transactions for each of the specific increments of time into a recommended minimum number of persons required at one or more skill levels;

10 and

producing a recommended staffing schedule for the period of time that represents the recommended minimum number of persons required for each skill level for each of the specific increments of time.

15 69. The computer readable memory of claim 68 wherein generating the predicted volume and the predicted timing of transactions for the period of time to be scheduled includes recording and storing transaction data for a workflow site and averaging the stored transaction data over a given time.

20 70. The computer readable memory of claim 68 wherein the recommended staffing schedule further includes a budgeted number of hours to be allocated for each skill level for the period of time.

71. The computer readable memory of claim 70 wherein the budgeted number of hours to be allocated for each skill level includes a number of hours based on the average stored transaction data.

5 72. The computer readable memory of claim 70 wherein the recommended staffing schedule includes a discretionary number of hours expressed as a difference between the recommended minimum number of persons required for each skill level and the budgeted number of hours to be allocated for each skill level.

10 73. The computer readable memory of claim 72 wherein one or more discretionary hours allocated to a first skill level can be allocated to a second skill level to reduce a negative difference between the recommended minimum number and the budgeted number of hours.

74. The computer readable memory of claim 68 further comprising comparing the
15 recommended staffing schedule for the period of time to an actual staffing schedule for a prior similar period of time, and producing from the comparison a gap/surplus staffing schedule that identifies surpluses and deficiencies of a number of persons for each skill level for each of the specific increments of time.

20 75. The computer readable memory of claim 74 wherein the surpluses and deficiencies of the number of persons for each skill level are expressed in terms of a difference between the recommended minimum number and the budgeted number of persons for each skill level.

76. The computer readable memory of claim 74 further comprising adjusting the gap/surplus staffing schedule to eliminate surpluses and deficiencies of persons for each skill level in view of the budgeted number of hours to be allocated for the skill level.

5 77. The computer readable memory of claim 76 wherein adjusting the gap/surplus staffing schedule includes adjusting one of a start time of one or more persons for a skill level and an end time of one or more persons for the skill level.

78. The computer readable memory of claim 76 further comprising producing the staffing
10 schedule for assigning persons to the transaction workflow from the adjusted gap/surplus staffing schedule.

79. The computer readable memory of claim 68 wherein the period of time includes one of a day, a week and a month.

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80. The computer readable memory of claim 79 wherein each of the specific increments of time includes an hour.

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81. A workflow management method for processing a drug prescription in a pharmacy comprising:

receiving a drug prescription;

estimating a date and a time by which the drug prescription will be fulfilled and

5 available to a customer;

initiating a prescription transaction to fulfill the drug prescription by retrieving data from the drug prescription;

checking the pharmacy inventory;

obtaining refill authorization, if needed;

10 obtaining an insurance adjudication review;

generating and conveying to the customer a predicted prescription pick-up time, the predicted prescription pick-up time being determined by one of confirming the estimated date and time and resetting the estimated date and time by which the drug prescription will be fulfilled and available to the customer based on an outcome of one or more of retrieving data,

15 checking pharmacy inventory, obtaining refill authorization and obtaining insurance adjudication review;

identifying one or more problems associated with one or more of retrieving data, checking pharmacy inventory, obtaining refill authorization and obtaining insurance adjudication review;

20 initiating resolution of the one or more problems by entering data identifying the one or more problems in an action note;

resolving the one or more problems and recording a history of resolution of the one or more problems in the action note;

conducting a drug utilization review; and

fulfilling the drug prescription before the predicted prescription pick-up time.

- 5 82. A computer readable memory having a computer software program for controlling workflow for processing a drug prescription in a pharmacy comprising:
- recording an estimated date and time by which the drug prescription will be fulfilled and available to a customer;
- initiating a prescription transaction by recording data from the drug prescription;
- 10 checking the pharmacy inventory;
- obtaining refill authorization, if needed;
- obtaining insurance adjudication review;
- generating and conveying to the customer a predicted prescription pick-up time, the predicted prescription pick-up time being determined by one of confirming the estimated date
- 15 and time and resetting the estimated date and time by which the drug prescription will be fulfilled and available to the customer based on an outcome of one or more of retrieving data, checking pharmacy inventory, obtaining refill authorization and obtaining insurance adjudication review;
- conducting a drug utilization review; and
- 20 fulfilling the drug prescription by the prescription pick-up time.

83. A method for determining a staffing schedule for assigning persons to a transaction workflow comprising:

generating a predicted volume of transactions for a period of time to be scheduled;

generating a predicted timing of the predicted volume of transactions for the period of

5 time;

expressing the predicted timing as a predicted volume of transactions for each of specific increments of time within the period of time to be scheduled;

converting the predicted volume of transactions for each of the specific increments of time into a recommended minimum number of persons required at one or more skill levels;

10 producing a recommended staffing schedule for the period of time that represents the recommended minimum number of persons required at each skill level for each of the specific increments of time; and

comparing the recommended staffing schedule for the period of time to an actual staffing schedule for a prior similar period of time and producing from the comparison a

15 gap/surplus staffing schedule that identifies surpluses and deficiencies of a number of persons for each skill level for each of the specific increments of time.

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84. A computer readable memory having a computer program for determining a staffing schedule for assigning persons to a transaction workflow comprising:

generating a predicted volume of transactions for a period of time to be scheduled;

generating a predicted timing of the predicted volume of transactions for the period of

5 time;

expressing the predicted timing as a predicted volume of transactions for each of specific increments of time within the period of time to be scheduled;

converting the predicted volume of transactions for each of the specific increments of time into a recommended minimum number of persons required at one or more skill levels;

10 producing a recommended staffing schedule for the period of time that represents the recommended minimum number of persons required at each skill level for each of the specific increments of time; and

comparing the recommended staffing schedule for the period of time to an actual staffing schedule for a prior similar period of time and producing from the comparison a

15 gap/surplus staffing schedule that identifies surpluses and deficiencies of a number of persons for each skill level for each of the specific increments of time.